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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

RECORD BREAKING WEATHER HELPS MAKE COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND THE BEST ON RECORD FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE

Businesses, Hotels, and Attractions Across the State Report Record Breaking Weekend!

Concord, New Hampshire, October 11th, 2011 – According to tourism officials, visitors came to New Hampshire over the holiday weekend in record breaking numbers. The weather was sunny and warm and the leaves on the trees were showing off their fall canopy of reds, yellows, oranges and gold.

“The incredible weather along with our stunning fall foliage really helped make the holiday weekend the best on record for New Hampshire,” said Lori Harnois, Director of the New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism Development. “We are happy to say that we have heard from businesses, attractions and lodging properties all across the state about how successful this weekend was for them, and in some cases record-breaking.”

Comments from our tourism partners include:

Mary DeVries, Executive Director of the Wolfeboro Area Chamber of Commerce said, “We experienced a record number of visitors to the Wolfeboro Area Information Center, starting on Thursday and continuing through Monday. Locals and people from out of town were out enjoying every minute of the incredible weather, taking in the variety of dining, shopping and outdoor activities available in the Wolfeboro area. Businesses certainly benefited by the abundance of sun and warm weather too.”

Cathy Bedor, Marketing Director for The Cog Railroad said “The Cog had one of the best Columbus weekends in several years. We are on pace to have a record season for group travel as well.”

Jim Morash, General Manager, M/S Mt. Washington Cruises said “We had one of the best holiday weekends that we’ve had in many years, putting more than 3,000 passengers on board over the long weekend, including Friday. This was more than double what we had last year, and at least 50%

higher than an average weekend. The summer-like weather certainly helped; and there is no better way to see and enjoy foliage than in New Hampshire on Lake Winnepesaukee in the fall.”

Kathy Bennett, Director of Marketing at Cranmore Mountain Resort said “The Ghoullog had record breaking attendance for Saturday night and we exceeded last year's attendance for Friday and Sunday too.”

Susan Logan, Marketing Director for the Conway Scenic Railroad said “Most of our trains were sold out for the weekend. This was the busiest Columbus Day we’ve seen in years.”

Robert Arey, Director of Operations for Polar Caves Park said “Polar Caves has enjoyed a great holiday weekend. The attendance numbers are close to being the best we have ever had for Columbus Weekend.”

Jan Hussey, Owner of Whit's End Campground said “We were 100% occupied this weekend at our 95 overnight sites and 40 seasonal sites. In some cases, we were letting a few tents, popups and small RV's share sites as well.”

Josh Boyd, General Manager for Wildcat Mountain said “Wildcat Mountain had a wonderful weekend. It was the busiest of the whole summer!”

Cindy Foster, Director of Sales for the Hampton Inn and Suites North Conway said “We were calling as far away as Portsmouth and Concord to try and find rooms for holiday travelers because we were sold out. We had several motor coach tours and strong leisure travel for the holiday weekend. The last weekend of the Fryeburg Fair creates tremendous demand in the White Mountains. We achieved our highest daily room rate ever in our six years here because the demand was so great for lodging over the holiday weekend.”

Bruce Hicks, Marketing Elf for Santa's Village said “Santa's Village had a very good Columbus Day weekend about 4% above last year. This year however we were still able to have our water park open and many children were able to enjoy it. With the sun setting a little earlier, Santa turned on many of his Christmas Lights giving guests an idea of what it will look like over the Holidays when the entire park is transformed into a winter wonderland.”

Mark LaClair, Executive Director of the Lincoln Woodstock Chamber of Commerce said, “The Lincoln Woodstock Chamber Lodging Members saw increases in occupancy this year over the same period last year. Friday night occupancy percentage across the board was up 11% over last year. Saturday night was up 3% and Sunday night was up 6% over Columbus Weekend last year. The weather forecasted during the preceding week certainly played part in the push. Our office fielded calls right up to the last minute trying to find availability for would-be visitors. All of our members

are reporting strong sales versus last year, with increases on all 3 days. Foliage peaked on the perfect weekend, and we cannot be more enthused with our numbers.”

Janice Crawford, Executive Director of the Mount Washington Valley Chamber of Commerce said “I was pleased to hear from many attractions that their rides and events topped records for the weekend. The leaves were peaking in the northern part of the Valley, but have been slower to turn in the more southern areas of the Valley, which promises to extend Mt Washington Valley’s foliage season even longer.”

John DeVivo, General Manager of Cannon Mountain and Franconia Notch State Park said “Paid admissions to the Flume were up every day of the holiday weekend with Sunday’s numbers as of noon that day up 15.8% over last year.”

Valerie Rochon, Tourism Manager for the Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce said, “The record-setting weather also set records for our hotels in Portsmouth, with both Saturday AND Sunday nights sold out, and Friday coming close. Some properties are reporting that last night, Monday, reached close to sold-out levels as well. Restaurants are reporting a “super-fantastic” weekend, right through Monday night. The three days of good weather seemed to build up momentum that ran right through the weekend. The beaches were packed for the three days of the weekend, with traffic similar to an August Sunday. Retail shops saw high foot traffic, but mixed reports about sales.”

Kate Bartlet, Innkeeper, Henniker House Bed and Breakfast said, “We were full in advance of the weekend. The most interesting thing about it is that in our 5 rooms, we have only one from New England. All the rest are Utah, CO, TX & Sweden.”

Greg Pitman, President of the New Hampshire Campground Owners Association said “We could not have asked for a nicer weekend weather-wise. Campers come here from all over the country to enjoy the state’s great outdoors. Campers coming to New Hampshire have a variety of activities that they can enjoy, from water sports at the lakes, rivers or seacoast to antiquing, country fairs, iconic attractions like Storyland or the MS Mount Washington or leaf-peeping while taking a drive along a country road.”

Go to www.visitnh.gov for events, itineraries, to book lodging, and find more great information on New Hampshire and the upcoming fall season.

ABOUT THE DIVISION OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The Division of Travel and Tourism Development, as part of the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, works with the state’s seven travel regions to increase visitation, travel and visitor expenditures in order to expand business activity and employment throughout the state. The division is responsible for domestic and international advertising and

public relations, literature publication and distribution, www.visitnh.gov administration, grant administration and research to monitor and measure the impact of travel and tourism to the state. For more information about New Hampshire tourism, call 603-271-2665 or visit www.visitnh.gov.

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